

An *Epistle* to be Communicated to
Friends, & to be read in the Fear of the Lord
 in their Men and Womens Meetings, and
 other Meetings; only among Friends, as
 they in the Wisdom of God shall see meet
 and serviceable.

FRIENDS,

WHereas it hath pleased the Lord in the
 unspeakable Riches of his Mercy, to vi-
 sit a Remnant in his Love, and to meet
 with us in a Way where we expected him not, when
 we were wandring from Mountain to Hill, and chusing
 our own Ways, seeking the Living amongst the Dead;
 yea, when we had long thus wearied our selves, and
 almost dispaired of finding what we sought, but were
 saying in our selves, *who shall ascend up, or descend down*
for us, to bring that to us, without which our immortal Souls
can find no Rest? Even in that time is the Lord appear-
 ed, not as a God afar off, but a God near, even in our
 Hearts is he appeared through the Light of his Son,
 and thereby open'd he our Hearts and Understandings,
 according to his divine Wisdom, who knew every
 ones State and every ones Necessity; and he became
 as a Pillar of a Cloud by Day, and as a Pillar of Fire by
 Night unto all such as imbraced and received his Ap-
 pearance, and followed him faithfully; yea, he be-
 came as a *wall of fire* round about them who did whole.

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ly put their trust in him. And thus hath he gathered us to be a people, who were once as scattered Sheep that knew not the true Shepherd; and hath made us as Firstlings upon his holy Mountain, that we might be as Lights and Leaders to the next Generations; and many are so in the Sight of the Lord and his Anointed, and are so felt and known among his People.

And seeing we are called to be as Firstlings and Examples to the Generations that are coming after us, it is highly needful that we watch diligently in the Fear and Wisdom of God, that nothing may be, nor remain among us as an Old Leaven, to grieve and burden the Redeemed, nor to be an Occasion of Evil Example to the Young Ones that are coming up after us: And considering that it is every ones Duty to be faithful in their Measures, and not to put that under a *Bushe* which is manifested from the Lord, but to bring it forth in the true Love of God, and Faithfulness to each other, to the edifying and building up, and to the Amendment and Admonition of those concerned, and that all Causes of Stumbling might be removed, and that we might not leave a *Hoof* in *Egypt*, but might all follow the *Lamb* as the *Redeemed of the Lord* together; and being Washed, Sanctified and Born again, might come to sing the New Song, with the New Name in our Foreheads, and Hallelujahs in our Mouths, *Amen, Amen.*

For these good Ends it is in my heart to signify these two things, that at the present are principally upon me, which I have born a weight concerning for several years, and did hope that some elder and fitter might feel the like Weight, and bring forth a Testimony concerning the same, whereupon I have forborn as long as well I durst; but now finding that I am not cleared

ed of the Matter, but that in a fresh living Sense it is renewed in me, I dare not longer forbear to write the things that are upon my Spirit in these two Particulars, and recommend the same unto God's Witnes in all Consciences.

The first thing that lies before me is, concerning the *bringing up of our Children*, which is a very weighty Concern; and every one that hath the bringing up of Children will have very much to answer for, if they do not quit themselves as before the Lord in all Diligence and Faithfulness; they are God's Creatures, and given to Parents as a Gift from him, upon whom they are to improve their utmost Diligence, that they may grow up in the Fear of God; and that Parents should not over-look things in their Children through fond Affection, which they know by the Light of Jesus to be evil and bad; neither speak to them in a *slender Reproof*, as *Eli* did to his *Sons*, but from their youth upwards to set before their Eyes the Weight & Danger of their Iniquity, and that in a Holy Zeal, as for the Lord, and in a deep sense of his holy Power, seeking in their young years to reach the Witness of God in them, and above all things, to be a Good Example to them in all things, or else we break down in them that which we seek to build up; for how can we build them up in the Faith, except we so stand in the Faith as to obtain the Victory in our selves? and how can we bring their Minds to the Light of Jesus, except we walk in it? Neither ought any-one to be bitter to their Children, nor to require more of them then we know they are of Ability to perform; and when they fall short of their Duty, not to Correct them in our own Wills, nor in a Wrathful Angry Mind; for that Mind is it self for Correction; but on the contrary, to help them with

the Rod of a gentle Chastizement, in the Fear of God, to bow their own stubborn Wills, and so comes the Witness in them to be reached, and they grow sensible in themselves *that the Rod hath been a Help to them*, and come to feel a Love and Unity with them that have so helped them, while their Minds are kept to the Truth.

And seeing we are as a *City set upon a Hill*, and as *Fore-runners and Leaders to the next Generations*, where and in what should the Pattern of our Godly Lives more appear and shine forth, then to the Innocent Children of our own Birth and Generation, which are committed to us as a particular Charge and Ministry, from their time of greatest Innocency upwards, to whom we are bound by the Band of *Nature*, and by the Ordinance of *God*, to take Care over, and to bring up in his pure Fear, in all Wisdom, Discretion and Watchfulness, *that we may be a good Saviour in them and to them, whether it be unto Life, if they be Obedient, or unto Condemnation, if they become rebellious?* But alas! (with a great grief of spirit I write it) here is a great want and shortness in many professing Truth (I speak not of all) for first, they receive not their Children as from the Lord, in the Faith as his Gift, neither do they offer them up again to him in their hearts, as being his, but seeing their own Likeness, brought forth, embrace it as their own, and nourish it up in the self-love, and their lives being bound up in the children, every Appearance of sickness or death is as a death to the Parents; and accordingly if the Child grow up till its perverse and crooked Will begins to appear, then is the Father (and for the most part, most of all the Mother) afraid to give it due Correction, fearing lest the Child should be grieved and vexed, and perhaps grow sick, yea, perhaps dye, if it should be corrected to the breaking of its stout and stubborn Will; and what is this but Unbelief

belief and Self-love in such Parents? but when Parents receive & possess their Children in the Faith, then the Light rules in the Parents, and that gives daily *wisdom* to rule the Children in *God's wisdom*; but when *fleshy affection* rules, what miserable *disorder* doth it bring forth, even amongst them that profess *truth*? and many times their *children* grow worse then many in the *world*; and that which is most to be lamented it happens sometimes, *that the Parents have not quit themselves as they ought, nor fully clear'd themselves of their Blood*, so that there lies a Guilt upon the Parents, and an Offence and stumbling in the minds of the Children, when they come to years, and to see how their Parents *Care* was not over them as it ought to have been: Oh, that none among us might be found guilty in this matter, but that every Friend would be diligent to keep a Good Conscience in the sight of God, that our Children may have a blessed Remembrance of us when we come to be taken from them, and they come to be in our state and condition, and that the Remembrance of our dealing with them may be as a good Pattern to them, and so from Generation to Generation, to the Honour and Glory of him who first called us, and to the edifying of them in the Faith, and to our Joy and everlasting Comfort, *Amen.*

The second thing that lies as a weight upon me, and have done for several Years, is concerning the *manner of Trading* that is practised by several professing the pure Principle of Truth, both Merchants and Shop-keepers, and other Trades-men, who take too much Liberty in getting and borrowing Money of others to enlarge their Trading in the World, beyond what Truth allows: When I first felt the weight of
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this matter upon me, I presently examined my own
 Affairs, and took such a course as to prevent all peril
 of any Body suffering by me, however things might
 happen; and the same course did our Brethren take,
 who lived in those parts, they feeling the weight of
 the matter upon them as well as I; so that we came to
 fit every one as under our own Fig-tree, being satis-
 fied that if we came to suffer los in our outward
 things, whether for our Testimony, or by War, or
 by Sea, we should lose but our own: But many I find
 to be otherwise minded, who out of a greedy,
 though uncertain Hope of Profit, gets that which is o-
 ther Mens into their Hands; and when they see
 things goes not according to their Expectations, but
 that Losses and Crosses happens in their Trading, are
 not so faithful and open hearted to let their Creditors
 know thereof, but rather goes on, setting them-
 selves at Ease, and takes a large Liberty in their House-
 keeping and Expences, as if all that is under their
 Hands were their own; and this lasts a while, until
 not only their own, but other mens Estates are spent
 also, and all the while under a shew of Profession, al-
 though all uprightness, and fear of God, and regard
 to make a righteous Account with men be lost; these
 are a sink among men, and a shame to their Profes-
 sion: And this Evil increaseth daily in some parts of
 this Nation, where many young Ones, brought up
 among us, and hath little to begin withal, upon the
 Reputation of Truth dares to adventure upon, and get
 Credits, and set themselves in a high posture of Trad-
 ing, House-keeping, and Expences. And some that
 are Ancient Professors of Truth, and should watch
 over them, and Counsel and Bridle them with the
 Bridle of Truth and Righteousness, in the Power and
 Wisdom

Wisdom of God, they are so incumbred with great Dealings, and great Debts, and Credits, and Adventu- res, both of what is their own and other mens, that they are not without Peril and Danger of falling short at one time or other, if loss at Sea, or spoiling of Goods for their Testimony should happen to them- selves; & in the mean time that Godly care and jealousie is not taken by such over the younger sort as it ought to be; but some runs on without fear of God, or upright Communication of their State and Condi- tion unto sound and faithful weighty Friends (and e- specially to such, whom they have made to be con- cerned in their Concerns) as they ought to do from time to time, that it might stand in their choice, whe- ther they would be longer concerned with them or not; which is but a righteous and just thing, that eve- ry Creditor ought to keep, not only the Propriety, but the Command of what is his own, to ask it and re- ceive it, when he sees cause, and not to be beguiled by great shews, as if the Debtor were in a good Con- dition as to his outward Estate, when indeed its very bad: But such do like this World, first seek the King- dom of this World under a Profession of Truth: But if the Kingdom of Heaven were first sought, as it ought to be, then every one would sink down in the fear of God, to feel him leading them and ordering their Trading and Merchandize in subjection to his Will, *Jam. 4. 13, 14, 15. Go to now, ye that say to day or to mor- row, We will go into such a City, and continue there a Year, and buy and sell, and get Gain; whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow: For what is your Life, it is even a Vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. For that ye ought to say, If the the Lord will, we shall live and do this or that. And not to go on*
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in their own Wills, adventuring the Estates of others without their knowledge or consent; when they themselves knows well enough, that if the Adventures fail, their Security must fail also. Oh! how many Widows and Orphans, Old and Weak are there oppressed and wronged by these things? Doth not such think and believe that the Want, Poverty, and Cry of these will bring down Vengeance from the Righteous God? or think they not, that God will visit for these things for his pretious Truth and Names-sake, and for the Cry of the Oppressed? yea, assuredly he will plead their Cause, and will disburthen and clear his Truth and People of them, & their unrighteous Deeds together.

Is it not our duty, both Old and Young, to set our Affairs in such a posture, as that we may be out of danger that any Body should suffer by us, while we in the mean time only aim at our own profit & advantage. Oh, let the Truth here be judge, and then I know the Elder Friends will labour to quit themselves in this matter, and so have power to put a stop and bridle to such young Ones as takes this course, or else the peril and reproach of both will lie at their Doer in a great measure. Oh! that a holy Zeal may increase in many Hearts for the removing of this great Evil, and let go the eager desire of great profit; and every one to be content with his own, and serve the Lord and his Truth therewith according to his Ability. (and if he please, he will increase it) And take care of the younger sort, and become good Examples to them in this matter, that the stink of offences in this kind may be stopped, and the Truth of God may prosper and flourish more and more, *Amen.*

Colchester the 29th of 2
the 9th Mon. 1677.

Geertnyd Derik Wiesen.
Devils Kichen.

